

III. THE FIRST CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE FIRST CENSUS ACT—DEBATES IN THE CONGRESS—PROVISIONS OF THE ACT—EXECUTION OF THE LAW—THE ENUMERATION—THE RETURNS—THE ENUMERATORS' SCHEDULES.

The provision under which the Federal census is taken is contained in Article I, section 2, of the Constitution of the United States, which directs that—

Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this Union according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons. The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct.

The debates in the Constitutional Convention do not afford any evidence that the scope of the census was seriously considered. There is reason to believe, however, that many members of the convention had in mind more than a mere count of the inhabitants. Several of them contended that representatives and direct taxes should be apportioned according to wealth as well as population. Mr. Ellsworth introduced a motion "that the rule of contribution by direct taxation, for the support of the Government of the United States, shall be the number of white inhabitants, and three-fifths of every other description in the several states, until some other rule, that shall more accurately ascertain the wealth of the several states, can be devised and adopted by the legislature."¹ Mr. Williamson introduced a motion "that, in order to ascertain the alterations that may happen in the population and wealth of the several states, a census shall be taken of the free white inhabitants, and three-fifths of those of other descriptions," etc.²

THE FIRST CENSUS ACT.

The provision of the Constitution quoted above does not clearly define the scope of the census, and the question whether it is restrictive—that is, whether the words "actual enumeration" apply exclusively to the objects mentioned—has never been considered judicially. But the provision has often been interpreted as restrictive, and the question has been raised whether Congress has not transcended its constitutional pow-

ers in authorizing purely statistical inquiries other than those for the single purpose of apportioning representatives and direct taxes.³ In this connection the debates in Congress on the bill providing for the First Census are of especial interest.

On May 18, 1789, soon after the convening of the First Congress, a committee was appointed in the House of Representatives to prepare and bring in a bill providing for the "actual enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States, in conformity with the Constitution;" this committee never reported. On January 11, 1790, another committee, consisting of ten members (one from each state), was appointed for the same purpose; it reported a bill on January 19.

The House debates on this bill are reported in the *Annals of Congress*, First Congress, second session. From Mr. Madison's remarks it is evident that the schedule reported by the committee provided for only a bare enumeration of the inhabitants.

Mr. Madison observed that they had now an opportunity of obtaining the most useful information for those who should hereafter be called upon to legislate for their country, if this bill was extended so as to embrace some other objects besides the bare enumeration of the inhabitants; it would enable them to adapt the public measures to the particular circumstances of the community. In order to know the various interests of the United States, it was necessary that the description of the several classes into which the community is divided should be accurately known. On this knowledge the legislature might proceed to make proper provision for the agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing interests, but without it they could never make their provisions in due proportion.

This kind of information, he observed, all legislatures had wished for, but this kind of information had never been obtained in any country. He wished, therefore, to avail himself of the present opportunity of accomplishing so valuable a purpose. If the plan was pursued in taking every future census, it would give them an opportunity of marking the progress of the society and distinguishing the growth of every interest. This would furnish ground for many useful calculations, and at the same time answer the purpose of a check on the officers who were employed to make the enumeration, for as much as the aggregate number is divisible into parts, any imposition might be discovered with proportionable ease. If these ideas meet the approbation of the House, he hoped they would pass over the schedule in the second clause of the bill, and he would endeavor to prepare something to accomplish this object.

The House granted Mr. Madison's request, and he formulated a more elaborate schedule. Just what his

¹ The Madison Papers, page 1082.

² Elliott's Debates on the Federal Constitution, vol. 5, page 295.

³ Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. 5, page 339.

plan was in detail is not stated in the Annals of Congress, but the issue of the Boston Gazette and the Country Journal for February 8, 1790, in its report of the proceedings of Congress, contains the following:

Mr. Madison proposed the following as the form of a general schedule, in lieu of that in the bill, viz:

Free white males under 16.

Free white males above 16.

White females.

Free blacks.

Slaves.

He then proposed that a particular schedule should likewise be included in the bill, specifying the number of persons employed in the various arts and professions carried on in the United States.

When the bill again came up for discussion, on February 2—

Mr. Livermore apprehended this (Madison's) plan was too extensive to be carried into operation and divided the people into classes too minute to be readily ascertained. For example, many inhabitants of New Hampshire pursued two, three, or four occupations, but which was the principal one depended upon the season of the year or some other adventitious circumstance; some followed weaving in the spring and summer, but the making of shoes was the most predominant in the fall and winter; under what class are these people to be thrown, especially if they joined husbandry and carpenter's work to the rest? He was confident the distinction which the gentlemen wished to make could not be performed. He was therefore against adding additional labor, and consequently incurring additional expense, whether the work was executed or not. Besides this, he apprehended that it would excite the jealousy of the people; they would suspect that the Government was too particular, in order to learn their ability to bear the burden of direct or other taxes, and under this idea they may refuse to give the officer such a particular account as the law requires, by which means you expose him to great inconvenience and delay in the performance of his duty. * * *

Mr. Page thought this particular method of describing the people would occasion alarm among them; they would suppose the Government intended something, by putting the Union to this additional expense, besides gratifying an idle curiosity; their purposes can not be supposed the same as the historian's or philosopher's—they are statesmen, and all their measures are suspected of policy. If he had not heard the object so well explained on this floor, as one of the people, he might have been jealous of the attempt, as it could serve no real purpose, for, he contended, if they were now acquainted with the minutiae they would not be benefited by it. He hoped the business would be accomplished in some other way. * * *

Mr. Madison thought it was more likely that the people would suppose the information was required for its true object, namely, to know in what proportion to distribute the benefits resulting from an efficient General Government.

It is significant that in the discussion of Madison's schedule there is no suggestion recorded in the Annals of Congress that it was unconstitutional; but the Boston newspaper quoted above has this paragraph:

Mr. White said that tho' he should be pleased with obtaining an enumeration on the gentleman's plan, he rather supposed that Congress is not authorized by the Constitution to call for so particular an account. The Constitution refers only to a census for the more perfectly equalizing the representation.

This objection had apparently little weight, and the bill passed with Madison's schedule and all of his amendments.

In the Senate the provision for ascertaining the occupations of the people was rejected—on what grounds is not known, for the debates of that body at that time were behind closed doors.

In the debate in the House with regard to the time to be allowed for completing the enumeration, six, four, and three months were proposed. Mr. Sedgwick, of Massachusetts, believed that since so long a time was to elapse before the assistants were to enter upon their duties the work of preparation should be completed in two or three months, and possibly one month would be sufficient. It was argued that the longer the time allowed the less accurate would be the returns.

Mr. Madison observed that the situation of the several states was so various that the difficulty of adopting a plan for effecting the business upon terms that would give general satisfaction could only be obviated by allowing sufficient time. Some of the states have been accustomed to take the enumeration of their citizens; others have never done it at all. To the former the business will be easy, and may be completed within the shortest period; in the others it will be attended with unforeseen difficulties.

Six months was agreed upon by the House, but in the Senate this was changed to nine months. The bill passed the Senate on February 22 and was approved by the President on March 1, 1790.

Provisions of the act.—By the First Census act the marshals of the several judicial districts of the United States were authorized and required to cause the number of the inhabitants within their respective districts to be taken, "omitting Indians not taxed, and distinguishing free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, from all others; distinguishing also the sexes and colors of free persons, and the free males of 16 years and upward from those under that age." The inquiries regarding the color of free persons, the sex of the whites, and the separation of white males into those above and those below 16 years of age were outside of the constitutional requirement of the enumeration, and reflect the efforts of Madison to obtain a comprehensive census. The last inquiry was undoubtedly instituted for the purpose of ascertaining the industrial and military strength of the country.

For the purpose of this enumeration, which was to be commenced on the first Monday in August, 1790, and completed within nine calendar months, the marshals were empowered to appoint within their respective districts as many assistants or enumerators as should appear to them necessary, assigning to each a certain division of his district, which "shall consist of one or more counties, cities, towns, townships, hundreds, or parishes, or of a territory plainly and distinctly bounded by water courses, mountains, or public roads."

In the case of Rhode Island and Vermont subsequent legislation was had July 5, 1790, and March 2, 1791, respectively, by which the terms of the act providing for the first enumeration were extended to these two districts. The enumeration in Vermont was to com-

mence on the first Monday in April, 1791, and to close within five calendar months thereafter. By an act of November 8, 1791, the time for the completion of the census in South Carolina was extended to March 1, 1792.

Before entering upon the discharge of their duties, the marshals and assistant marshals were required to take an oath to cause to be made, or to make, as the case might be, "a just and perfect enumeration and description of all persons" residing within their several districts.

For the purpose of settling all doubts which might arise respecting the persons to be returned and the manner of making the returns, it was provided that every person whose usual place of abode was in any family on the aforesaid first Monday in August should be returned as in such family; that any person without any "usual place of abode" was to be enumerated in the district in which he was on the first Monday in August; and that any person who at the time of the enumeration was temporarily absent from his usual place of abode should be returned as belonging to that place in which he usually resided. The act further provided that every person 16 years of age and over who refused or failed to render a true account when required by the enumerator to answer questions in contemplation of the act, was liable to a fine of \$20. Penalties were prescribed also for the failure of an enumerator or marshal to comply with the provisions of the act.

The amount of compensation prescribed for the marshals of the districts varied from \$100 to \$500, as follows:

\$100—Rhode Island, Delaware.

200—Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey.

300—Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, South Carolina.

350—North Carolina.

500—Virginia.

The rate of compensation allowed the assistants was \$1 for every 300 persons in cities and towns containing more than 5,000 persons, and \$1 for every 150 persons in country districts; but in those districts where, "from the dispersed situation of the inhabitants," \$1 for 150 persons should seem inadequate, the marshals were authorized, subject to the approval of the judges of their respective districts, to increase the compensation to \$1 for not less than 50 persons returned.

One of the peculiar provisions of the law, worthy of notice, was that each assistant, before making his return to the marshal, was required to "cause a correct copy, signed by himself, of the schedule containing the number of inhabitants within his division to be set up at two of the most public places within the same, there to remain for the inspection of all concerned," for which work, upon satisfactory proof, he was entitled to receive \$4.

Each assistant was required to make his returns to his marshal within the allotted time, on a properly

ruled schedule "distinguishing the several families by the names of their master, mistress, steward, overseer, or other principal person therein," and showing for each family the number of free white males 16 years and upward, including heads of families, free white males under 16 years, free white females, including heads of families, all other free persons, and slaves.

The marshals were required to transmit to the President of the United States on or before September 1, 1791, "the aggregate amount of each description of persons within their respective districts," and to file the original returns of their assistants with the clerks of their respective district courts, "who are hereby directed to receive and carefully preserve the same." The total cost of the First Census was \$44,377.28.

EXECUTION OF THE LAW.

Upon the President, whose duties at that period included active supervision of all the routine affairs of government, devolved the task of making the first enumeration. Just what method he followed in putting the First Census law into operation is not definitely known. It is generally supposed that he or the Secretary of State dispatched copies of the law to the different marshals, with orders to take the census; but a search of the correspondence files of the State Department, made to ascertain whether this theory could be substantiated, did not reveal any record of correspondence with the marshals for 1790 other than that in connection with the transmission of their commissions.

It has been suggested by some writers that the marshals may have received their instructions through the governors of the several states. During the early years of the country's history it was customary to transmit to the governor of each state, to be communicated to the legislature, copies of all important Federal laws. In the files of the State Department there is a record that in March, 1790, a circular letter containing two copies of the census act was sent to the governors of the several states, and it has been suggested that this letter may have contained directions to the governors to issue instructions to the marshals; but the fact that no such instructions are included in the list of inclosures given in the following copy of this letter, which was published in the Archives of Pennsylvania,¹ seems inconsistent with this theory:

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE,

March 31st, 1790.

SIR:

I have the honor to send you, herewith enclosed, two copies, duly authenticated, of the Act providing for the enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States; also of the Act to establish a uniform rule of naturalization; also of the Act making appropriations for the support of the Government for the year 1790, and of being, with sentiments of the most perfect respect.

Your Excellency's most obed't & most h'ble servant,

TH. JEFFERSON.

His Excellency The President of Pennsylvania.

¹ Vol. II, page 679.

This letter does not conclusively disprove the theory, for other letters containing the instructions may have been sent to the governors; but all of the important correspondence of the governor of Pennsylvania for the year 1790 is apparently published in the Archives, and although other letters from Jefferson are included, in none is the subject of the census mentioned. In short, there is little reason to doubt that the Federal Government dealt directly with Federal representatives in the several states and territories.

The First Census law omitted to make provision for an enumeration of the inhabitants in the Northwest and Southwest territories. There is no record of any enumeration of the Northwest Territory in 1790. At that time the governor was actively engaged in Indian warfare, and doubtless it was impossible for him to undertake a census. At any rate, so far as is known there was no correspondence between Secretary Jefferson and Governor St. Clair relative to the subject.

In the case of the Southwest Territory, which was fast being settled, it seems to have occurred to Secretary Jefferson, as an afterthought, that an enumeration of the inhabitants would be of value, and he accordingly sent the following letter to Governor Blount:

PHILADELPHIA, March 12, 1791.

SIR:

I am honored with your favor of February 17, as I had been before with that of November 26, both of which have been laid before the President.

Within a few days the printing of the laws of the 3d. session of Congress will be completed, and they shall be forwarded to you as soon as they are so.

As the census of all the rest of the Union will be taken in the course of this summer, and will not be taken again under ten years, it is thought extremely desirable that that of your Government should be taken also, and arranged under the same classes as prescribed by the Act of Congress for the general census. Yet that act has not required it in your Territory, nor provided for any expense which might attend it. As, however, you have Sheriffs who will be traversing their Districts for other purposes, it is referred to you whether the taking of the census on the general plan, could not be added to their other duties, and as it would give scarcely any additional trouble, whether it would require any additional reward, or more than some incidental accommodation or advantage, which, perhaps, it might be in your power to throw in their way. The returns by the Sheriffs should be regularly authenticated first by themselves, and then by you, and the whole sent here as early in the course of the summer as practicable. I have the honor to be with great esteem and respect, Sir, &c

TH. JEFFERSON.

As there was no marshal for this territory, for the purpose of this enumeration Governor Blount was virtually both governor and marshal. Hence this letter can hardly be accepted as throwing any light on the question whether the marshals received their instructions from the Secretary of State or from the state governors.

The suggestion has been advanced that the First Census act was considered self-explanatory. The above letter affords no evidence that Governor Blount received any instructions regarding the enumeration

other than those contained in the census act. It is probable that the marshals and assistant marshals were allowed to interpret the act for themselves. The form of the returns and of the marshals' summaries is all but conclusive on this point, since there is no uniformity among them. The census act indicated the form of schedule which should be used by the enumerators, and so far as known all the returns were made in accordance with this form, except those for Maine and the Southwest Territory. It also instructed the marshal to show in his summary the aggregate number of each description of persons within his district, but it did not indicate what subdivisions of the district should be made. Some of the returns give only the information required by the census act, while others give much additional information, such as the number of houses and of families, the excess of males or of females, and the population of towns, townships, and principal places.

The enumeration.—The enumeration was ordered to commence on August 2, 1790, and to close within nine calendar months. The census law did not require, however, that the enumerators should prosecute their work continuously to completion. The dates upon which the assistants swore to their returns indicate that many must have worked intermittently; some of the returns were attested only a few weeks after August 2, but the majority bear dates several months later.

Although the area enumerated at the census of 1790 was only a fraction of the area of enumeration at the present time, it presented serious difficulties for the enumerator. The boundaries of towns and other minor civil divisions, and in some cases of counties, were ill defined, so that the enumerator must often have been uncertain whether a family resided in his district or in an adjoining district. This condition existed particularly in the newly settled portions of the country, where the local government had not been fully organized. In many sections the danger from hostile Indians doubtless made travel unsafe for the enumerator.

The pay allowed the enumerator for his work was very small, the highest rate under any conditions being only \$1 for 50 persons, out of which the enumerator had to furnish schedules properly ruled. In some cases this was barely enough to pay the expenses of the enumerator, and in at least one state the marshal had difficulty in getting enumerators at the established rates of pay. Under these circumstances, it is reasonable to suppose that many of the isolated households of pioneers were not enumerated.

One difficulty encountered by the enumerators in certain sections of the country was the unwillingness of the people to give the information required. Many persons had never before been enumerated. Some were superstitious regarding a census. An early colonial enumeration in New York had been followed

by much sickness; and the people, recalling that a similar experience had befallen the children of Israel as the result of an enumeration made by King David, ascribed this sickness directly to the census. But a very much more potent factor in arousing opposition to the enumeration was the belief that the census was in some way connected with taxation.

As predicted in the debate which preceded the adoption of the census act in the House of Representatives, the enumeration proceeded more rapidly in those states which had already taken a census than in those which had not. Samuel Bradford, the enumerator for the city of Boston and some outlying districts, began work on August 2, 1790, and on August 21 had completed the enumeration of the city. His notebook shows that the work required seventeen working days, and that he enumerated on an average more than one thousand persons per day. As his compensation was \$1 for every 300 persons enumerated, his earnings amounted to more than \$3 per day—compensation about equal to that of enumerators to-day, and, with few if any exceptions, greatly in excess of that earned by the other enumerators at the First Census.

The enumerators published the results for their districts as soon as their work was completed, and many of the newspapers of that period contained frequent statements concerning the population of different places. The population for the whole of the state of Massachusetts was first published in the *Columbian Centinel* of February 26, 1791. The population of several towns in Rhode Island was published early in October, 1790, and the population of the city of Charleston, S. C., appeared in the *Pennsylvania Packet* for November 12 of that year.

It is probable that in all the states, except Vermont and South Carolina, the enumeration was completed within the nine months allowed by the census act. In Vermont the enumeration did not commence until the first Monday in April, 1791, and was not required to be completed for five months.

In South Carolina the marshal experienced difficulty in getting assistants at the lawful rate of pay, and the enumeration met with some opposition from the people. In September, 1791, the grand jury of the Federal district court for Charleston made a presentment against six persons for refusing to render an account of persons in their families as required by the census act, and also a presentment against one of the enumerators for neglect of duty in not completing his district in conformity with the act.¹ In October of that year the Representatives of South Carolina in Congress stated that the census in that state had been nearly completed, but that the rate of pay was so small and the conditions such that for certain sections of the state the marshal had been unable to secure enumerators; an extension of time and a higher rate

of pay were asked for. An extension of time to March 1, 1792, was readily granted, but a higher rate of pay was refused. It was stated that as the marshals of some other states, who had complained of the inadequacy of the compensation allowed, had nevertheless contrived to get the work done at the prescribed rates, it would be inequitable for Congress to make an exception in the case of South Carolina. The marshal's return for this state is dated February 5, 1792, which was eighteen months and three days after the date when the enumeration was scheduled to commence.²

The census in the Southwest Territory was taken by the captains of the militia, apparently without compensation, on the last Saturday of July, 1791, and Governor Blount dated his return for the territory September 19, 1791, stating that five of the captains had not then reported. From this it would appear that the census was taken with more dispatch in this territory than in some of the organized states.

THE RETURNS.

The returns of the enumerators were made to the marshals. These officials, after having made a summary showing the "aggregate amount of each description of persons within their respective districts," as required by law, deposited them, as directed, with the clerks of the district courts for safe-keeping. The marshals' summaries were sent direct to the President, by whom they were turned over to the Secretary of State, who made or caused to be made copies thereof, which were sent to the ministers of the United States abroad. The President also sent to Congress, on October 27, 1791, a tabular statement of the results of the census in each of the states except South Carolina, where the enumeration had not then been completed. The return for this state was subsequently communicated on March 3, 1792.

The First Census report contained a return of population for all the states by counties; in the returns for North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and the Southwest Territory, the counties were grouped under districts. For some states the population was given also by minor civil divisions. Detailed information of this character was printed wherever the return was made in detail by the marshal to the Department of State. In many instances, however, the marshal did not furnish the Federal Government with the details which had been supplied to him by the enumerators under his supervision; consequently, for a large part of the territory enumerated, no detailed information was published—nor, indeed, has the population of the minor civil divisions within the states for which such

² The enumeration, therefore, must have included some persons not in existence in 1790. It is probable, however, that the delayed schedules were from the more remote and sparsely settled sections of the state and added but little to the total population. Thus to a very small extent the census of 1790 perhaps overstates the population, with the result that the census of 1800 fails to show the actual decennial increase.

¹ *New York Daily Advertiser*, November 1, 1791.



EARLY CENSUS SCHEDULES

information existed but was not published, been available heretofore to students, except by consulting the original schedules.

In Table 104, page 188, is published for the first time a complete return of the population, at the First Census, of all the states and territories by counties and minor civil divisions, so far as the schedules still in existence permit.

The published returns.—The results of the census, exclusive of the returns for South Carolina, were first published in book form in 1791, in what is now a very rare little octavo volume of 56 pages; later editions, published in 1793 and 1802, included the report for South Carolina. For the preparation of this volume little tabulation was required, and no extra clerical force was employed; the marshals' summaries were sent direct to the printer, and published in the form in which they were received, with a summary showing the population of the United States by states.

For the district of Maine the returns relate only to the total population, without any of the subdivisions required by the act. In the returns for the Southwest Territory, the white males are divided into those 21 (instead of 16) years and over and those under 21 years. The printed returns of the marshals of all the

other states cover the details required by the census act as to the number of each class of persons enumerated, but do not present these details by cities and towns, except for the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, and part of New Jersey. The printed results for the remaining districts are confined to the counties and a few of the larger cities and towns.

In addition to the information prescribed by the census act, the marshal for the district of Massachusetts gave the number of dwelling houses and of families in each city and town covered by the report. The marshal for the district of New York included in his returns the excess of males or females among the white population of each city and town for which report was made. In Pennsylvania the enumerators of the city of Philadelphia furnished the occupations of all heads of families enumerated.¹

¹ Clement Biddle, the marshal for the state of Pennsylvania, published in 1791 a directory of the city of Philadelphia, in which the names and occupations of many, if not all, of the inhabitants of the city proper are the same as those of the heads of families shown in the census schedules. It is possible and perhaps probable that the occupations of the heads of families were obtained in the census enumeration for use in this directory.

TABLE 7.—POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES AS RETURNED AT THE FIRST CENSUS, BY STATES: 1790.

DISTRICT.	Free white males of 16 years and upward, including heads of families.	Free white males under 16 years.	Free white females, including heads of families.	All other free persons.	Slaves.	Total.
Vermont.....	22,435	22,328	40,505	255	116	85,539
New Hampshire.....	36,086	34,851	70,160	630	158	141,885
Maine.....	24,384	24,748	46,870	538	None.	96,540
Massachusetts.....	95,453	87,289	190,582	5,463	None.	378,787
Rhode Island.....	16,019	15,799	32,652	3,407	948	68,825
Connecticut.....	60,523	54,403	117,448	2,808	2,764	237,946
New York.....	83,700	78,122	152,320	4,654	21,324	340,120
New Jersey.....	45,251	41,416	83,287	2,762	11,423	184,139
Pennsylvania.....	110,788	106,948	206,363	6,537	3,737	434,373
Delaware.....	11,783	12,143	22,384	3,899	8,887	59,094
Maryland.....	55,915	51,339	101,395	8,043	103,036	319,728
Virginia.....	110,936	116,135	215,046	12,866	292,627	747,610
Kentucky.....	15,154	17,057	28,922	114	12,430	73,677
North Carolina.....	69,988	77,506	140,710	4,975	100,572	393,751
South Carolina.....	35,576	37,722	66,880	1,801	107,094	249,073
Georgia.....	13,103	14,044	25,739	398	29,264	82,548
Total number of inhabitants of the United States exclusive of Southwest and Northwest territories.....	807,094	791,850	1,541,263	59,150	694,280	3,893,635
	Free white males of 21 years and upward.	Free males under 21 years of age.	Free white females.	All other persons.	Slaves.	Total.
Southwest Territory.....	6,271	10,277	15,365	361	3,417	35,691
Northwest Territory.....						

¹ The census of 1790, published in 1791, reports 16 slaves in Vermont. Subsequently, and up to 1880, the number is given as 17. An examination of the original manuscript returns shows that there never were any slaves in Vermont. The original error occurred in preparing the results for publication, when 16 persons, returned as "free colored," were classified as "slave."

² Corrected figures are 85,425, or 114 less than figures published in 1790, due to an error of addition in the returns for each of the towns of Fairfield, Milton, Shelburne, and Williston, in the county of Chittenden; Brookfield, Newbury, Randolph, and Strafford, in the county of Orange; Castleton, Clarendon, Hubbardton, Poultney, Rutland, Shrewsbury, and Wallingford, in the county of Rutland; Dummerston, Guilford, Halifax, and Westminster, in the county of Windham; and Woodstock, in the county of Windsor.

³ Corrected figures are 59,096, or 2 more than figures published in 1790, due to error in addition.

The varied form of the summaries was probably due to the fact that the marshals received no instructions as to the form the summaries should take, other than a copy of the census act. Most of the variations which occurred could have been overcome readily by correspondence and judicious editing, but the Secretary of State appears to have accepted the marshals' summaries as final, making no attempt to secure uniformity. Moreover, little attention seems to have been given to the preparation of the printed report of the First Census, for in some instances the columns of figures are added incorrectly, indicating either errors in proof reading or—more probably—inaccuracies in the manuscript delivered to the State Department and lack of editorial examination.

Attention is especially invited to the fact that for some unexplained reason the age classification specified under the act authorizing the census—the subdivision of white males into those 16 years of age and over and those under 16 years—was varied in the enumeration of the Southwest Territory, the total number of white males being divided into those 21 years of age and over and those under 21 years. This fact makes it impossible to classify the total white population of the nation by sex and age.

The total population reported by the First Census caused considerable disappointment. The following quotations from Jefferson clearly reflect the confident expectation of the people that a decidedly larger figure would be realized.

Under date of January 23, 1791, Jefferson wrote:

The census has made considerable progress, but will not be completed till midsummer. It is judged at present that our numbers will be between four and five millions. Virginia, it is supposed will be between 7 and 800,000.¹

On August 24, 1791, he wrote to William Carmichael as follows:

I enclose you a copy of our census, which, so far as it is written in black ink, is founded on actual returns, what is in red ink being conjectured, but very near the truth. Making very small allowance for omissions, which we know to have been very great, we may safely say we are above four millions.²

And again, on August 29, 1791, to William Short he wrote the following:

I enclose you also a copy of our census, written in black ink so far as we have actual returns, and supplied by conjecture in red ink, where we have no returns; but the conjectures are known to be very near the truth. Making very small allowance for omissions, which we know to have been very great, we are certainly above four millions, probably about four millions one hundred thousand.³

It is interesting to note that Washington shared

Jefferson's views as to the incompleteness of the returns. Under date of July 28, 1791, he wrote to Gouverneur Morris as follows:

In one of my letters to you, the account of the number of inhabitants which would probably be found in the United States on enumeration was too large. The estimate was then founded on the ideas held out by the gentlemen in Congress of the population of the several states, each of whom (as was very natural), looking through a magnifier, would speak of the greatest extent to which there was any probability of their numbers reaching. Returns of the census have already been made from several of the states, and a tolerably just estimate has been now formed in others, by which it appears that we shall hardly reach four millions; but this you are to take along with it, that the real number will greatly exceed the official return, because, from religious scruples, some would not give in their lists; from an apprehension that it was intended as the foundation of a tax, others concealed or diminished theirs; and from the indolence of the mass and want of activity in many of the deputy enumerators, numbers are omitted. The authenticated number will, however, be far greater, I believe, than has ever been allowed in Europe, and will have no small influence in enabling them to form a more just opinion of our present growing importance than have yet been entertained there.⁴

The enumerators' schedules.—It is impossible to trace clearly the history of the original, or enumerators' schedules. The census act states that the marshals shall deposit them, under a heavy penalty for failure to do so, with the clerks of the district courts of their respective districts. The acts for the censuses of 1800, 1810, and 1820 contained the same provisions. By an act of Congress approved May 28, 1830, the clerks of the several district courts of the United States were directed to transmit to the Secretary of State such schedules of the first four censuses as were in their respective offices.⁵ The schedules were kept in the custody of the Secretary of State until the organization of the Interior Department, in 1849, when they were transferred, together with the returns of the succeeding censuses, to the custody of the Secretary of the Interior. They were kept in a fireproof vault in the Patent Office until June, 1904, when they were transferred to the Census Office, where they have since remained.

Some of the volumes appear not to have been as carefully preserved as the census acts required; from some volumes sheets have been torn out and lost, while others are stained, illegible, and partly burned. In 1897 the schedules for all censuses prior to 1890 were carefully examined, and it was ascertained that for the censuses of 1790 to 1820, inclusive, the files were incomplete. The missing schedules for the states and

⁴The Writings of Washington, Vol. X, pages 176 and 177.

⁵It is not certain that the first four census acts had been observed by the marshals and that this resolution was complied with in all cases by the clerks of the district courts. The schedules for the census of 1790 for Rhode Island, however, were forwarded to the Secretary of State at Washington in compliance with the resolution, for bound in the schedules is the affidavit dated June 22, 1830, of the clerk of the district court of that state to the effect that he is forwarding the said schedules.

¹The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. VIII, page 122.

²Ibid., page 229.

³Ibid., page 236.

territories included in the area of the United States in 1790 are indicated by asterisks in the following table:

STATE OR TERRITORY.	1790	1800	1810	1820
Rhode Island.....	*	*	*	*
New Jersey.....	*	*	*	*
Delaware.....	*	*	*	*
Virginia.....	*	*	*	*
South Carolina.....	*	*	*	*
Georgia (including Alabama ¹ and Mississippi).....	*	*	*	*
Kentucky.....	*	*	*	*
Southwest Territory (Tennessee).....	*	*	*	*
Northwest Territory ² (Ohio, ³ Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin).....	*	*	*	*

¹ The schedules for Alabama in 1820 are not in existence.

² There is no evidence of any enumeration of Northwest Territory in 1790.

³ The schedules for Ohio in 1820 are in existence.

Of the schedules for all the remaining states and organized territories, those for Arkansas in 1820 alone are missing.

With a view to ascertaining the whereabouts of the missing volumes, the Department of the Interior conducted a correspondence with the heads of the several Executive Departments at Washington, with the governors of the several states, and, through the Department of Justice, with the clerks of the courts in said states. None of them could be recovered, however, nor was it possible to procure any information regarding them.

There is a record that the 1790 returns for Virginia were destroyed when the British burned the Capitol at Washington during the War of 1812. But it is a question whether anything more than the marshal's summary was burned; if the First Census law was complied with, the original returns must have been in the custody of the clerk of the district court of Virginia.

Doctor Chickering, in his "Statistical View of the Population of Massachusetts,"¹ published in 1846, states that a copy of the 1790 schedules for Massachusetts was lost in the destruction of the Patent Office by fire on December 15, 1836, and that soon afterwards the original schedules in the district clerk's office in Massachusetts were ordered to be sent to Washington to replace the copy destroyed. But the Patent Office fire here referred to was not discovered until it had gained such great headway that the persons in the building barely escaped with their lives. It is probable that all the census returns were kept together; and, if so, the burning of any of the returns would doubtless have meant the destruction of the entire series. Moreover, a report made to Congress by the Commissioner of Patents, December 28, 1836, giving what purports to be a complete list of everything lost in the fire, makes no mention of any census schedules being burned.

Fortunately, the 1790 schedules for the states which were most populous at that period, with the exception of Virginia, are still in existence; and the place of those for Virginia is taken in some measure by lists of inhabitants at state enumerations made near the close

of the Revolutionary War. As shown by the aggregate returns for the six inquiries at the First Census, the relative importance of the omitted states (including Virginia) is as follows:

ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION.	Total returns.	RETURNS FOR WHICH SCHEDULES ARE—		
		Preserved.	Lost.	
			Number.	Per cent of total returns.
Total population.....	3,929,625	2,684,499	1,245,126	31.7
White population.....	3,172,444	2,327,292	845,152	26.6
Free white males 16 years and upward, including heads of families.....	815,098	600,926	214,172	26.3
Free white males under 16 years.....	800,663	580,114	220,549	27.5
Free white females, including heads of families.....	1,556,683	1,146,222	410,461	26.4
All other free persons.....	59,557	38,253	21,304	35.8
Slaves.....	697,624	318,984	378,640	54.3

For each of the inquiries relating to white persons, the proportion represented by the lost schedules is about one-fourth; for free negroes, one-third; and for slaves, slightly more than one-half. Most of the slaves for which the schedules are lost were reported by Virginia.

The schedules of the First Census on file in the Census Office are as follows:

Maine.....	1 volume.
New Hampshire.....	2 volumes.
Vermont.....	2 volumes.
Massachusetts.....	1 volume.
Rhode Island.....	1 volume.
Connecticut.....	3 volumes.
New York.....	4 volumes.
Pennsylvania.....	8 volumes.
Maryland.....	2 volumes.
North Carolina.....	2 volumes.
South Carolina.....	1 volume.
Total.....	27 volumes.

These volumes differ widely in shape and size. The paper for the schedules was furnished by the enumerators themselves, and is of many different kinds. It varies from 4 to 36 inches in length, the longer sheets requiring several folds. Many enumerators used merchants' account books, journals, or ledgers; others used large sheets of paper, neatly ruled and folded. The headings were generally written in by hand, but printed headings were used on the schedules for Massachusetts and for one district of New York. All of the schedules for Massachusetts are on printed blanks of uniform size, a fact which suggests that the blanks were furnished or sold to the enumerators by the marshal. Most of the volumes contain the schedules of several enumerators, though a few enumerators handed in schedules sufficient to fill a whole volume. For a binding sometimes an old newspaper, heavy wrapping paper, or a piece of wall paper was used.

In 1897 the 1790 schedules were paged, arranged, and indexed by the Department of the Interior, and carefully repaired with transparent silk to prevent further deterioration.

In the returns of some of the enumerators the names of heads of families are arranged alphabetically, indicating that they were copied from preliminary notes gathered while making the enumeration. In many cases the name of a minister, as being the chief personage in a town, heads the list, regardless of alphabetical or other arrangement. Many of the entries are picturesque. Few men had more than one Christian name; hence, in order to make it clear what person was meant, additional information was often

given, as "Leonard Clements (of Walter)," "Sarah Chapman, (Wid. of Jno.)," "Walter Clements (Cornwallis Neck)." In the Southern states there were many plantations whose owners were absent at the time of the enumeration; frequently the name of the owner was given, with large holdings of slaves, but not one white person enumerated. Some slaves who were living apart from their owners, either alone or as heads of households, were entered separately, as "Peter, negro (Chas. Wells property)." Heads of free colored families were often stated to be "free," as "Ruth, Free negro," "Brown, John (free mulatto)." Some enumerators obtained the number of free colored males, as well as of free whites, above and below 16 years of age.